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EDITORIALS—

Leash on CIA's Watchdog Far Too Slack for Safety

As readers of this newspaper will perhaps recall, a short while back the Gazette published a series of five comprehensive articles about the operations and structure of the Central Intelligence Agency, written by a team of New York Times correspondents based in the United States and abroad.

In the opening paragraphs of the initial article the authors asserted the CIA hardly enjoyed the confidence of the nation. But they went on to maintain the agency wasn't nearly so badly managed or its affairs so poorly run, as was popularly imagined.

There, then, followed the recounting of an incredible number of blunderings and miscalculations, committed throughout the world, which, far from supporting the earlier apology, produced — at least in our mind — even greater fears regarding this essential agency's conduct and general worth than we'd previously held.

Sen. Fulbright's foreign relations committee must also have been shaken by the revelations. A majority of the committee has introduced and recommended legislation to provide closer congressional scrutiny of CIA activities. The legislation is merely one of 150 similar proposals presented Congress during the past 20 years on the same subject, proving again congressional concern about the CIA runs deep and wide.

Currently, the CIA is supervised by Sen. Richard Russell, D-Ga., and what a New York Times editorialist calls "his 'Secret Seven' — a Senate subcommittee selected, with CIA screening, from the armed services and appropriations committees..." This seldom publicized, virtually anonymous band of solons takes a dim view of having

its authority diminished or supplanted, and to date the membership, in cooperation with the executive, has been successful in warding off every invasion upon its territory. It is perhaps superfluous to add that the term apologist and Secret Seven have much in common.

"Tighter control of the CIA by the administration," claims a recent N. Y. Times editorial, "...has been imposed since the Bay of Pigs fiasco. But such control is no substitute for legislative supervision as part of the system of checks and balances of our constitutional government. The latest proof of inadequate control concerns the propriety of the administration letting CIA analysts present official arguments to American readers in the guise of independent scholarship."

The latter reference is to an article on the Viet Cong appearing in the latest issue of Foreign Affairs. The author, George A. Carver, is an employee of the CIA, but Foreign Affairs forgets to mention the association, although it is assuredly pertinent. For example, does anyone think for a moment the article wasn't cleared by CIA intelligence and information personnel before being published? And does anyone think for a moment more any article by an active CIA employee displeasing to the Johnson administration or to the CIA, which, incidentally, isn't necessarily the same thing, as the Bay of Pigs clearly revealed, would have received clearance?

There is a further objection. The CIA, plus the United States Information Agency, is restricted by its charter to activities overseas. It has, as the Times asserts, "no business to seek to influence or color domestic opinion. It is one thing for an authorized spokesman of the government openly to pre-

sent the evidence for the administration's contention that the National Liberation Front of South Viet Nam is nothing more than an instrument of North Viet Nam's Communist party. It is quite another thing for a CIA official to do so, particularly when his identity is not revealed."

Sen. Fulbright is demanding that Adm. Raborn, head of the CIA, explain the Carver incident. His demand is in order.

But the basic problem of the CIA is that its congressional supervisors, those directly responsible for reviewing the agency's policies and programs, have demonstrated no enthusiasm for playing the role of the Devil's advocate, despite the need for such criticism. The members of the Secret Seven bring to their watchdog assignment a rationale of thought and opinion that accepts unquestioningly and unhesitatingly "domino theories," Munich analogies, and the impervious rectitude of the American position in today's world. Skeptics of these simplistic attitudes toward international contradictions have been frozen out of review procedures.

The Dominican Republic crisis, Viet Nam, fragmentation of the North Atlantic Alliance, the United States' continuing troubles with South America are evidence enough that the nation's foreign policy stance and the arcane agencies charged with implementing policy should be subjected to searching inquiry and censorious examination.

Suppose Sen. Fulbright had been among the Secret Seven at the time the Bay of Pigs exercise was planned and developed? Might not that disaster have been averted? Or, assuming Sen. Fulbright could have been convinced of the operation's essentiality, would possibly sufficient power, which was lacking, have been brought to bear to achieve what sponsors had hoped?

The Secret Seven must be expanded or a few of the membership replaced with elected officials who can bring a different, fresh, more inquisitive outlook to CIA activities, men who won't be loath to raise objections when they believe a particular projected enterprise is folly compounded and antithetical to stated affirmations of traditional American philosophy.